



February 24, 2022

Dear Members of the Connecticut General Assembly Appropriations Committee:

We encourage you to approve the \$3.6 million investment in the American Rescue Plan Act earmarked for the evidenced-based community violence intervention programs to reduce gun deaths and injuries in the communities that are most impacted by gun violence in Connecticut.

Interpersonal gun violence has devastated too many families in Connecticut. In 2020, there were 157 homicides and guns were used in the vast majority of these murders in mostly communities of color. Approximately 56% of the state's gun homicide victims are Black but only 10% of the state's population is Black.

Last year, Newtown Action Alliance and Ethan Miller Song Foundations launched the Campaign to #KeepKidsSafe. We are working to reduce homicides, suicides, unintentional shootings, school shootings, and interpersonal gun violence in the State of Connecticut and beyond.

Newtown and Guilford have been devastated by shootings stemming from negligent gun owners not safely storing their firearms in the presence of minors and a person with severe mental illness. Unsecured guns are also stolen and seep into communities of color as crime guns. That is why Newtown Action Alliance and Ethan Miller Song Foundations have teamed up with partners to distribute gun safes, provide gun buyback opportunities for gun owners who wish to safely remove guns from their homes, and educate the communities on gun safety.

On October 16, 2021, we partnered with police departments, hospitals, survivor, faith, gun violence prevention, and community violence intervention groups to hold the First Annual #KeepKidsSafe Connecticut Statewide Gun Buyback and Gun Safe Giveaway Day in Guilford, Hartford, Newtown, Norwalk, Stamford and Waterbury. It was a huge success. We collected 531 weapons including 10 assault weapons, distributed 309 gun safes, and hundreds of gun safety brochures on safe storage and suicide prevention. Studies after studies demonstrate that more guns in our homes and communities result in more gun deaths and injuries therefore less guns in our homes and communities will result in less gun deaths and injuries. Having more guns safely stored will result in less crime guns in the communities of color.

After our successful event, we urged Governor Ned Lamont and the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to support the annual statewide gun safety events and the DESPP has requested \$375,000 in the budget to help fund this life saving initiative. In addition to approving the ARPA funds for community violence intervention programs, we urge you to approve the funds for the buyback and safe giveaway days. Gun violence costs Connecticut \$1.4 billion each year, of which \$60.4 million is paid by taxpayers. \$375,000 is the fraction of the cost related to gun violence in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Po Murray, Chairwoman of Newtown Action Alliance Foundation  
Kristin and Mike Song, Founders of Ethan Miller Song Foundation

